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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effect on grades and dropout rates of students' videotaping their first speech in a basic speech course. Subjects, 224 students at a northwest college, were tested for communication and for speech apprehension using McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension. All students were offered an opportunity to videotape and critique their first speech from two semesters. Statistical tests showed a marked increase in grade point average (GPA) for the group of students that videotaped over the group of students who did not: the average GPA of apprehensive videotapers is significantly higher than that of apprehensive non-videotapers. However, because the samples are not random, this increase cannot be attributed to the videotaping. The results also indicated that no apprehensive students who videotaped their speeches withdrew from class, compared to 22 apprehensive non-videotapers who did withdraw. (HTH)

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IMPROVEMENT IN GRADES AND DROPOUT RATES OF APPREHENSIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO VOLUNTARILY VIDEOTAPED THEIR SPEECHES

by

Diane B. Foley, RN, BS, MA

Paper presented at the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting
of the
Montana Academy of Sciences
Montana College of Mienral Science and Technology
Butte, Montana

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ABSTRACT

Improvement in Grades and Dropout Rates of Apprehensive College Students Who Voluntarily Videotaped Their First Speeches

Two-hundred-and-twenty-four students in the basic speech course at a northwest college were tested for communication apprehension and for speech apprehension. The instrument used was McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-24 items (PRCA-24). All students were offered an opportunity to videotape and critique their first speech throughout two semesters.

In this context, this research focused on two academic behavioral manifestations of communication apprehension: higher attrition rates from the basic speech course and lower GPA's. In this study, apprehensive students who videotaped had significantly lower dropout rates (none withdrew from class compared to twenty-two apprehensive non-videotapers who withdrew).

Three statistical tests were performed to see if there was any difference in GPA's: the mean GPA of the apprehensive videotapers was significantly higher--3.31, compared to 2.24 for the apprehensives who chose not to videotape.

Diane B. Foley, RN, BS, MA

Paper presented at the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Montana Academy of Sciences, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Butte, Montana, April 20, 1985.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication apprehension (CA) is defined as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1977, 1981). It is apparently the curse of the silent minority. One-fifth of the population is afflicted with it, and if you are one of the twenty percent, it can cripple you socially and strangle your financial potential. Student victims of CA (apprehensives) may be perceived as less socially and sexually attractive than are those who do not have CA (the non-apprehensives) (McCroskey, Daly, Richmond & Cox, 1975; McCroskey & Richmond, 1975; Quiggins, 1972; Fenton & Hopf, 1976; Wissmiller & Merker, 1976). Apprehensive students also get lower grade point averages (GPA's) (McCroskey & Anderson, 1976; Seiler, 1978; McCroskey, 1981; Boohar & Seiler, 1982), and they withdraw from classes more frequently than do the non-anxious (McCroskey, 1970; McCroskey, 1977). When the anxious one gets a job, (s)he is apt to refuse a promotion with high pay and more status because that promotion would required him/her to increase his/her communication (Scott, McCroskey & Sheehan, 1980).

In this paper, we're going to report a study wherein two hundred and twenty-four college students in the basic speech course during two semesters

were tested for total CA and CA in the context of public speaking. Each of the student/subjects (Ss) were then offered the opportunity to videotape and critique their own first speech with minimal supervision of a teaching assistant. The researchers finished by noting academic behavioral manifestations of CA (grades and dropout rates) of apprehensive and non-apprehensive Ss who chose to complete the videotaping and also those Ss who chose not to videotape.

THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument used to test Ss on the first day of class was the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-24 items (PRCA 24). Developed by J.C. McCroskey, who is the father as it were, of research on communication apprehension, the PRCA 24 is the most recent, reliable and valid instrument of its kind. In studies since 1942 (Gilkinson) (Paul 1966), instruments to measure CA and speech anxiety have progressed to have strong face validity (McCroskey, 1981), alpha reliability .91 of the public speaking anxiety (McCroskey & Beatty, 1984) plus data that support the PRCA 24 as a cross-situational, predictive instrument (McCroskey & Beatty, 1984).

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people. Please indicate in the appropriate space on the scantron the degrees to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly agree	Agree	Are undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree

1. I dislike participating in group discussions.
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in a group discussion.
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to paticipate in a meeting.
8. Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
15. Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
16. Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
24. While giving a speech I get so nervous, I forget facts I really know.

McCroskey, J.C., Oral Communication Apprehension: Reconceptualization and a New Look at Measurement. Paper presented at the Central States Speech Convention, Chicago, 1981.

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

There are four contexts of CA: speaker apprehension, group apprehension, meeting apprehension; also dyadic apprehension or anxiety about communicating with one other person. The PRCA 24 can be used to generate both a general score which indicates total communication apprehension; plus it can also be used to generate four subscores which represent any of the above-mentioned four contexts of CA.

In our study, we generated a general score of total CA for 224 Ss using the 24 items plus a sub-score using items 19-24 which generates your score of speech anxiety. Each context, such as speaker apprehension, has six items: three positively worded and three negatively worded to avoid response bias. For example, an "A" or "Strongly agree" on item 1 ("I dislike participating in group discussions") would give you the highest score or five points; "B" or "Agree" would give you four points, down to "E" or "Strongly disagree" which would give you one, or the least number of points on that item.

Item two is negatively worded, so you would get five points for "E" or "Strongly disagree," four points for "D" (or "Disagree") down to one point for "A" which is "Strongly agree."

The higher your score, the more apprehension you are reporting.

RANGE OF STUDENTS' SCORES ON TOTAL CA AND ON SPEAKER APPREHENSION

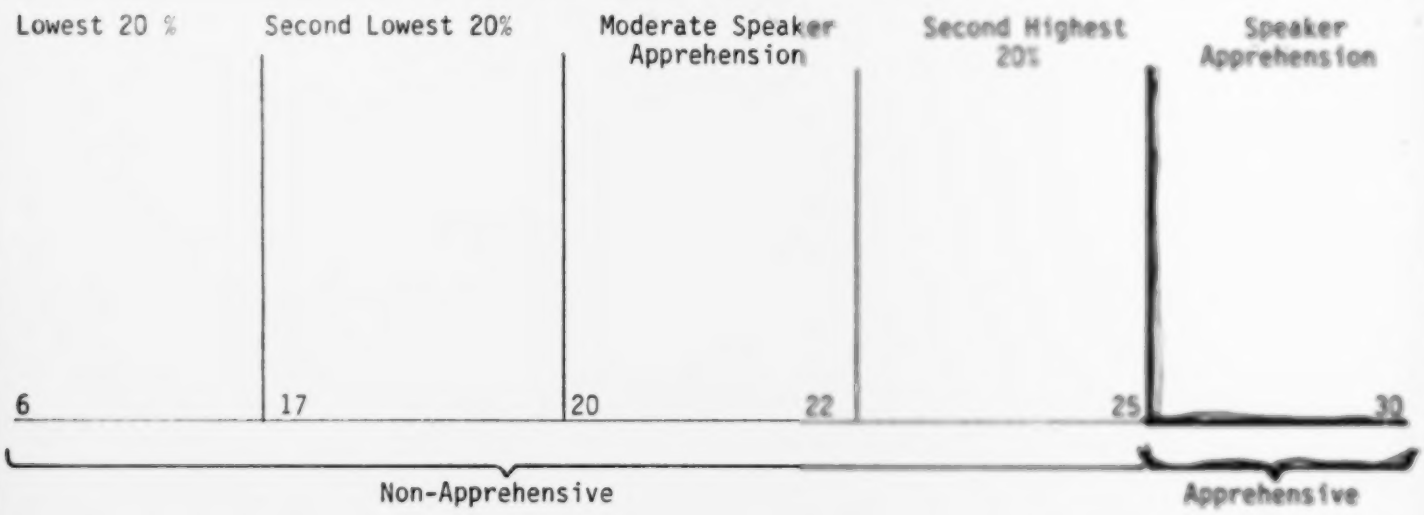
In this research, the range of scores on total CA reported by 224 ss, using all the items was 25 to 116. The highest fifth of Ss reporting total CA had scores of 85 to 116. These Ss fell into the category of "communication apprehension." This twenty percent will be referred to as "the apprehensives," see Chart 1.

CHART 1. Range of Students' Scores on Total Communication Apprehension

Non-Apprehensive				Apprehensive
Lowest 20 %	Second Lowest 20%	Moderate Communication Apprehension	Second Highest 20%	Communication Apprehension
Scores 25	61	68 77	87	116

In speaker apprehension (items 19-24) the range of students' scores was 6 to 30. Subjects who fell into the category of Speech apprehension," the fifth with highest scores on items 19-24 had scores of 25-30, see Chart 2.

CHART 2. Range of Students' Scores on Speaker Apprehension



LOWER GPA'S OF ALL APPREHENSIVES

Two academic behavioral manifestations associated with apprehensive students are lower GPA's and higher dropout rates--as high as 50 to 70 percent compared with an attition rate of 5 to 10 percent for students with low or moderate CA (McCroskey, 1970).

Our study validated the research on lower GPA's and higher attrition rates for apprehensives who did not choose intervention (videotaping of their speeches). Here are the comparisons of apprehensives' and non-apprehensives' final grades for fall semester; and winter semester through their first speech, see Chart 3.

CHART 3.

Semesters

Final GPA's

Fall

Non-apprehensives
48 Ss 2.46

Apprehensives
18 Ss 2.07

Non-apprehensives in speaker apprehension
48 Ss 2.48

Apprehensives in speaker apprehension
18 Ss 2.15

Winter (through first speech)

Non-apprehensives
48 Ss 2.99

Apprehensives
8 Ss 2.75

Non-apprehensives in speaker apprehension
42 Ss 3.12

Apprehensives in speaker apprehension
7 Ss 2.71

Therefore, as you can see, this study also shows lower GPA's from students who report CA and CA in the context of public speaking. When these Ss did not choose intervention (videotaping of their speeches) GPA's of apprehensive students were lower, whether they were final grades or grades of the first speeches.

HIGHER GPA'S OF STUDENTS WHO CHOSE TO VIDEOTAPE THEIR SPEECHES

The following chart shows grades of students from the basic speech class when the grades of the students who videotpaed their first speech are compared to the grades of the students who did not videotape.

CHART 4. GPA's of apprehensives and non-apprehensives who videotaped their speeches: compared to those who did not videotape their speeches.

Final GPA's

Fall

Non-apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	
48Ss	2.46
Who did videotape	
39 Ss	3.02
Apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	
18 Ss	2.07
Who did videotape	
7 Ss	2.85

Winter

Non-apprehensive	
Who did not videotape	
42 Ss	2.99
Who did videotape	
26 Ss	3.49
Apprehensive	
Who did not videotape	
8 Ss	2.75
Who did videotape	
4 Ss	3.72

CHART 4. (cont'd)

Fall

Non-speaker apprehensive	
Who did not videotape	
48 Ss	2.48
Who did videotape	
40 Ss	3.11
Speaker apprehensive	
Who did not videotape	
13 Ss	2.57
Who did videotape	
7 Ss	2.57

Part 2.

Winter

Non-speaker apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	
42 Ss	3.11
Who did videotape	
22 Ss	3.40
Speaker apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	
7 Ss	2.71
Who did videotape	
8 Ss	3.75

Statistical tests show a marked increase in average GPA for the group of students that videotaped over the group of students who did not: the average GPA of apprehensive videotapers is significantly higher than the average GPA of apprehensive non-videotapers. However, because the samples were not random, this increase can not be attributed to the videotaping (see the following discussion by Handley).

The mean GPA of control group and the test group were found to be 2.24 for the control group (no video) and 3.31 for the test group

(video). Three statistical tests were performed to see if there was any significant difference in these average GPA's. These tests were a test of hypotheses of the means of two normal distributions, variances unknown and assumed equal; a test of hypotheses on the means of two normal distributions, variances unknown and assumed unequal, and the Wilcoxon Two-Sample Test For Independent Samples. [The first two tests were used to see if the assumption of equal population variances was significant, it was not. A F test on the ratio of population variances was done. It showed that the assumption of equal population variances could not be rejected at the = .05 level. The Wilcoxon Test was performed to see if the assumption of a near normal populations was significant, it was not.][1]

The first two tests assume the underlying populations of the two groups follow at least a near normal distribution while the last test does not make this assumption. Each test showed that the mean GPA of the test group was significantly higher than the mean of the control group at the = .05 level. (See test at the end of this discussion.)

In using these statistical tests, two questions must be answered before the results can be assumed to be true:

1. Were the assumptions of the tests met?
2. What do the results of the tests show?

Were the assumptions of the tests met? By doing three different tests, all the assumptions were met except one--random samples. Were the samples random? I think not because the group that videotaped (the test group) all volunteered. This does not constitute a random sample. Does this nullify the tests? I think not, but what it does do is change what the tests show.

The tests show that the average GPA of the test group is significantly higher than the average GPA of the control group. While it would be nice to say that it was because of the volunteering, the students who videotaped are apt to have a higher level of motivation than the students who did not. Was the average GPA of the test group due to videotaping or due to higher motivation? The statistical tests do not answer this question. So, even though the statistical tests show a significantly higher GPA for the test group, they do not tell us why it is higher. This is not the only bias, because of non-randomness of the samples. Another study should be conducted using random samples, and a comparison of results done to see what kind of bias resulted from the volunteering in the first study.

A final word of caution about using these results. If they are interpreted to apply to students nation wide, the question of

[1] William W. Hines and Douglas C. Montgomery, Probationary and Statistics in Engineering and Management Science.

whether the sample accurately reflects the students of the nation must be answered. I do not know, but the sample was taken from a group that was from one area of the country (northwest) at an engineering school where students' predominant abilities lie in technical work. I can not say the sample does not, but these points tend to make me think not.

In summary, the statistical tests show a marked increase in average GPA for the group of students that videotaped over the students that did not, but because the samples were not random, this increase can not be attributed to the videotaping.

THREE STATISTICAL TESTS

A test of hypotheses on the mans of two normal distributions variances unknown and assumed equal.

H_0: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ Where μ_1 is the population means GPA of the

H_1: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 2$ test group and μ_2 is the population mean GPA of the control group.

Assumptions: Independent random samples from two normal distributions with unknown but equal variances.

$x_1 = 3.31$, $x_2 = 2.24$, $n_1 = 19$

$s_1^2 = .89$, $s_2^2 = 1.19$, $n_2 = 29$

$t_0 = 3.38$ $t_{.05.46} \cong 1.684$ $t_0 > t_{.05.46}$ =>Reject $H_0 : \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$

and assume that $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0 \Rightarrow \mu_1 > \mu_2$ at $\sigma = .05$.

At test of Hypotheses on the means of two normal distributions, variances unknown and assumed unequal.

H_0: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ $\sigma = .05$

H_1: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$

Assumptions: Independent random samples from two near normally distributed populations, with unknown and unequal variances.

$t_0^* = 3.31$ $t_{.05.45\ 1.684}$ => Reject H_0 $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ and assume

$H_1: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0 \Rightarrow \mu_1 > \mu_2$

The Wilcoxon Two Sample Test for independent samples

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$ $\sigma = .05$

$H_1: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

Assumptions: Independent non-normal populations that may differ only in their means, and random samples.[2]

$R_1 = 635.5$ $\mu_R = 169$ $\sigma_r^2 = 2249.91$ $\sigma = 47.43$ $n_1 = 19$, $n_2 = 29$

$Z_0 = 3.56$ $Z_{.05} = 1.96$ $Z_0 > Z_{.05}$ Reject $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$

Assume $H_1: \mu_1 > \mu_2$ [2]

LOWER ATTRITION RATES OF STUDENTS WHO CHOSE TO VIDEOTAPE THEIR SPEECHES

Apprehensive students withdraw from class more frequently than do non-apprehensive students, and this is the second behavioral manifestation of CA. In this study, we kept track of apprehensive and non-apprehensive students who dropped out of the speech course and compared the numbers of withdrawals who did not videotape to the numbers of withdrawals who did videotape and critique their own speeches. Here are the results.

[2]James L. Handley, Adjunct Instructor, Department of Mathematics & Computer Science, Montana College of Mineral Science & Technology, Butte, Montana.

CHART 5. Withdrawal rates of apprehensive and non-apprehensive videotapers and non-videotapers.

Attrition Rates	Average per 20%
Fall	
Non-apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	3.25 Students
Who did videotape	0
Apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	4
Who did videotape	0
Winter	
Non-apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	3
Who videotaped	1
Apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	8
Who did videotape	0
Fall	
Non-speech apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	3
Who did videotape	0
Speaker apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	5
Who did videotape	0
Winter	
Non-speaker apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	3.75
Who did videotape	1
Speaker apprehensives	
Who did not videotape	5
Who did videotape	0 Withdrawals

As the chart shows, no apprehensive students who videotaped withdrew from class, compared to twenty-two apprehensive non-videotapers who with-

drew. Throughout this study, teachers of the basic course were not informed which students reported C.A. or which students reported apprehension in the context of public speaking. The teachers remained blind to the identities of the apprehensives in order to remain unbiased in grading.

SUMMARY

Two hundred and twenty-four students in the basic speech course at a northwest college were tested for communication apprehension and for speech apprehension. The instrument used was McCroskey's which is a self-report with strong face validity, alpha reliability .91 for public speaking anxiety plus data that support the PRCA-24 as a cross-situational, predictive instrument. All students were offered an opportunity to videotape and critique their first speech throughout two semesters.

This research focused on two academic behavioral manifestations of communication apprehension--higher attrition rates from the basic speech, and lower GPA's. In this study, apprehensive students who videotaped had significantly lower dropout rates (none withdrew from class compared to twenty-two apprehensive non-videotapers who withdrew). Three statistical tests were performed to see if there was any significant difference in GPA's: a test of hypotheses of the means of two normal distributions, variances unknown and assumed equal; a test of hypotheses on the means of two normal distributions, variances unknown and assumed unequal; and the Wilcoxon Two-sample Test for independent samples. The mean GPA of the

apprehensive videotapers was significantly higher--3.31, compared to 2.24 for the apprehensives who chose not to videotape.

The fact that videotaping was voluntary on the part of the students raises two questions that might be addressed in future research:

1. Were the non-random apprehensive students who chose to videotape more highly motivated than the others?

2. If apprehensive students who are highly motivated to help themselves display fewer negative behavioral manifestations of communication apprehension (have lower dropout rates and higher GPA's) can more apprehensives be motivated to help themselves?

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this paper, we note that both apprehensive and non-apprehensive students who videotape and critique their own speeches also get higher grade point averages and have lower withdrawal rates from the basic speech course than students who do not videotape and critique their own speeches.

Throughout this study, all students had the option of whether or not to videotape. Was the higher GPA of the apprehensive videotapers due to higher motivation? A future study might be conducted using random samples.

The devestating consequences that communication apprehension inflicts

upon its victims can progress unchecked in college when a basic speech course may be required for the degree. If fewer academic behavioral manifestations (lower dropout rates and higher GPA's) are indeed the results of the apprehensives' higher motivation, future research on motivating these students plus motivating these students to receive treatment (a comprehensive list of treatments is authored by Foss, [1982]) would seem to be in order. One possibility in this context might be to explain some negative effects discussed in the first paragraph of this paper: that apprehensives may be perceived a sless socially and sexually attractive than non-apprehensives; that they may be perceived by the screener in the job interview as potentially less competant and less successsful; also that they may be apt to refuse a job promotion with higher pay because that promotion would require them to increase their communication.

If indeed it is the more highly motivated apprehensive students who do better academically, would motivation be increased if they realized that communication apprehension could cripple them socially and strangle their financial potential?

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